Inland Electronic Navigation Workshop Introduction

By Dr. Larry L. Daggett, Waterway Simulation Technology, Inc.

Let's go ahead and start as close as we can to the time. My name is Larry Daggett. I've been asked to chair the Inland Water Committee for the PIANC, the U.S. Section of PIANC. I would like to ask anybody that's here that's interested in being involved in that committee to let me know because frankly the committee had become inactive, and there wasn't much leadership going on.

Tom Ballentine asked me if I was interested in trying to reactivate it in getting it started. We had a meeting at the National Waterway Conference last year and found that there was some interest in that. We decided the best thing to do is to start off by getting active. We asked about setting up this workshop because one of the topics that I think of great interest is this inland navigation electronic navigation systems, and in particular the charting part of that.

Tony Niles and I talked, and Tony had suggested that this would be a very good topic. We worked out an outline, and we're going to proceed with that. Basically about the first hour is going to talk about the systems that are available today. An initiative that the Corps of Engineers has started to help improve the charting data that goes into the charts.

I think this has been one place that has been a problem and has been holding back some of the. It certainly is not making any confidence in the system as high as we would like to see it be for good navigation.

Then we're going to talk about some standards, and then we've got an hour set aside to have a number of vendors make some presentations about their system. What we've asked them to do is talk about the good things about their system, some things that are very positive about their system and places where they feel like there might be some limitations and some things that might be done to overcome those.

Since we've got six of them, we've got 60 minutes. That's about ten minutes a piece. So, I'm not given much time to go into the negatives. But we'll let them complain to us as much as they need to, and hopefully we'll hear them.

The whole goal of this is at the end, we'd like to have some response from the audience out there. We hope there's a number of towing industry people that can give us some feedback about their experiences so far and what they've learned and make some suggestions. We'd like to come up with some ideas about where we go from here.

For everybody's interest, there is a recording being made of this. They're recording on video as well as a court reporter over here recording this. We'll come out with some transcripts, and there will be a proceeding of this whole conference produced.

You may not have known that. Probably most of you didn't know that. So, be careful what you say and how much you say.

I actually have had a personal interest in this for some time. I guess it was probably about twelve, may even be fifteen years because we were asked by the Lower Mississippi Valley Division at that time, which is now Mississippi Valley Division of the Corps to work with them to take some data that they had and a new system that they were putting together, which was called REGIS and create some navigation charts that could be used on the waterway.

We did that, and we demonstrated those on the MV Mississippi for several seasons. We set a system up in a pilot house. We had a lot of interest in that, and then we worked within the corps trying to get the best data made available. We worked with NOAA and Coast Guard trying to really see the development of this electronic inland navigation system developed.

So, I'm glad to see that it's still working. I've kept contact with some of the companies. I'm no longer with the Corps now. I'm working in a private consulting firm of my own, but I'm still interested and I'm very anxious to hear what's going on today and where we stand in the system.

We're going to start with Fred Ganjon who's going to talk about systems available today, the good and the bad. And we'll follow that to Tony Niles. Tony will talk some about the Corps of Engineers activities and plans then Fred will get back up and talk to us about some RTCM standards. Fred worked for NOAA until he retired and was involved with some of the early ECDIS work and converting charts into the digital form, vector form, and all the early struggles that went on with that. He has since retired and is now President of IIC Technologies and CARIS. He's gotten involved in the private world and says he loves being a businessman now.

So, Fred, you want to tell us a little bit about what kind of systems are out there today.